This public service announcement has been approved by the board of selectmen town of Litchfield

Public Service Announcement September 1, 2009
Town of Litchfield, NH

What You Need To Know About

The Town of Litchfield has just been notified by the State of New Hampshire that mosquitoes collected in a trap in your area on August 19, 2009 have tested positive for Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE). Litchfield is one of several local communities in southern New Hampshire that have recently shown positive results. The Town is implementing preventative measures to help alleviate the situation.

How To Protect Yourself

- Remove old tires from the property.
- Dispose of cans, plastic containers, ceramic pots, or other containers.
- Drill holes in the bottom of recycling containers. Clean roof gutters.
- Clean and chlorinate pools. If not in use, keep empty and covered.
- Drain water from pool covers.
- Aerate garden ponds or stock them with fish.
- Turn over wheelbarrows and change water in bird baths at least twice weekly.
- Turn over plastic wading pools when not in use.
- Remind or help neighbors to eliminate breeding sites on their property.

Protect Yourself From Mosquito Bites

The first line of defense against mosquito- borne diseases is personal protection. Do not put yourself in a position where you are prone to being bitten by a mosquito. Mosquitoes are most active during early evening until after sunrise. However, if you enter wooded or shaded areas you can be bitten during daylight hours. Check window screens for holes or openings where mosquitoes can enter your house. To report dead birds, please contact the Health Officer at 424-4046.

The mosquito menace will end when freezing temperatures arrive. Typically this is in mid October.

If you have any questions concerning the Town of Litchfield's mosquito control program, please contact Alfred Raccio, Mosquito Control District Chairman, at 424-4046 or Litchfield public health at the same number.

Frequently asked questions (FAQ)

- TRANSMISSION: What is the basic EEEV transmission cycle? How do people become infected with EEEV?
    - EEEV is transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. It generally takes from 3 to 10 days to develop symptoms of EEE after being bitten by an infected mosquito.
    - The main EEEV transmission cycle is between birds and mosquitoes.
    - Many species of mosquitoes can become infected with EEEV. The most important mosquito species in maintaining the bird-mosquito transmission cycle is *Culiseta melanura*, which reproduces in freshwater hardwood swamps. *Culiseta melanura*, however, is not considered to be an important vector of EEEV to horses or humans because it feeds almost exclusively on birds. Transmission to horses or humans requires mosquito species capable of creating a "bridge" between infected birds and uninfected mammals such as some *Aedes*, *Coquillettidia*, and *Culex* species.
    - Horses are susceptible to EEE and some cases are fatal. EEEV infections in horses, however, are not a significant risk factor for human infection because horses are considered to be "dead-end" hosts for the virus (i.e., the amount of EEEV in their bloodstreams is usually insufficient to infect mosquitoes).
- ETIOLOGIC AGENT: What causes EEE?
    - Eastern equine encephalitis virus is a member of the family Togaviridae, genus *Alphavirus*.
    - Closely related to Western equine encephalitis virus and Venezuelan equine encephalitis virus
- **HUMAN CLINICAL FEATURES: What type of illness can occur?**
    - Many persons infected with EEEV have no apparent illness. In those persons who do develop illness, symptoms range from mild flu-like illness to EEE (inflammation of the brain), coma and death.
    - The mortality rate from EEE is approximately one-third, making it one of the most deadly mosquito-borne diseases in the United States.
    - There is no specific treatment for EEE; optimal medical care includes hospitalization and supportive care (for example, expert nursing care, respiratory support, prevention of secondary bacterial infections, and physical therapy, depending on the situation).
    - Approximately half of those persons who survive EEE will have mild to severe permanent neurologic damage.
- **INCIDENCE: How many and where have human EEE cases occurred?**
    - Approximately 220 confirmed cases in the US 1964-2004
    - Average of 5 cases/year, with a range from 0-15 cases
    - States with largest number of cases are Florida, Georgia, Massachusetts, and New Jersey.
    - EEEV transmission is most common in and around freshwater hardwood swamps in the Atlantic and Gulf Coast states and the Great Lakes region.
    - Human cases occur relatively infrequently, largely because the primary transmission cycle takes place in and around swampy areas where human populations tend to be limited.
- **RISK GROUPS: Who is at risk for developing EEE?**
    - Residents of and visitors to endemic areas(areas with an established presence of the virus)
    - People who engage in outdoor work and recreational activities in endemic areas

Persons over age 50 and younger than age 15 seem to be at greatest risk for developing severe EEE when infected with the virus.

Additional information may be located on the town website http://www.litchfield-nh.gov/index.htm, click on Mosquito Control District and follow the links as needed.

Alfred Raccio

Mosquito Control District